

NTL

Naugatuck Teachers League

President George Macary Vice-President Charles Marenghi
Secretary Nancy Foster Treasurer Mary Ellen Hennerberry

Testimony of George Macary and Charles Marenghi

Naugatuck Teachers' League

Before the

Appropriations Committee

Re:

HB 5117 AAC Portions of the State Budget Appropriating Aid to Municipalities

SB 1121 An Act Establishing A Task Force to Study the Distribution of State Funds to Municipalities

April 5, 2011

Senator Harp, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

We testify today as teachers representing the Naugatuck Teachers' League (NTL). I am George Macary, a resident of Waterbury who has been a teacher in Naugatuck for 37 years, and I currently serve as the President of the NTL. And I am Charles Marenghi, a native of Naugatuck, where I live with my family of 5. I am also a 15 year teacher in the Naugatuck school system and serve as Vice-President of the NTL. We thank you for the opportunity to address the distribution of state funds in the towns where we teach and live.

We are here today to address both House Bill 5117 AAC Portions of the State Budget Appropriating Aid to Municipalities and Senate Bill 1121 An Act Establishing A Task Force to Study the Distribution of State Funds to Municipalities.

Our concern is that these bills do not adequately address one important piece of the State's commitment to funding local schools – the minimum level of funding a town is required to budget known as the Minimum Budget Requirement. For example, there is a proposal in this committee (HB 6385 An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education that would lower the minimum budget requirement by \$3000 for each enrollee fewer than the previous year. According to data

from the Office of Fiscal Analysis, over \$750,000 of funding for Naugatuck's schools could be swept from our public school budget.

This remarkable given that since 2008-09, the Naugatuck school budget has been practically flat, increasing less than a third of a percent (.29%) over the last two years. In contract negotiations, our teachers agreed to step-freezes and increases to there of insurance amounting to \$620,000 savings going into the 2009-2010 school year. After that another \$900,000 was saved through furloughs, a shortened school year and other concessions. Schools were consolidated and class sizes went up. And, the number of school days for students has decreased from 182 to 180 at a time when, like all students, Naugatuck students could use those days to better prepare for an increasingly competitive jobs market.

The dynamics between the Board of Education and municipal body in Naugatuck, like many in the state, is not always cooperative and the needs identified in our schools not always met. If the MBR is allowed to diminish, Naugatuck schools could be decimated.

We urge the committee to ensure that the MBR is taken into consideration regarding HB 5117 and SB 1121. And, I thank the committee for allowing us to draw attention to the impact of MBR changes proposed this year in Naugatuck.

Respectfully submitted,

George Macary NTL President

Charles Marengi NTL Vice-President